

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive Member for Policy, and Resources for Decision

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Policy and Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Attendance at High Street Renewal and Reconfiguration Conference</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Planning and Development
<b>Strategy/Policy:</b>	
<b>Corporate Objective:</b>	

#### **Purpose:**

This report seeks approval for the Executive Member for Planning and Development to attend the High Street Renewal and Reconfiguration Conference, to be held on 3 February 2015 in Central London.

#### **Executive summary:**

The conference will be a timely opportunity to discuss latest thinking on best practice and policy priorities for revitalising Britain's high streets and town centres.

The discussion will take place in the context of a range of Government initiatives including:

- The Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill, which aims to improve access to finance and reduce red tape for growing small businesses;
- Wider implementation of the Retail Strategy, which sets out plans to strengthen partnerships between the Government and the retail sector;
- Planning system improvements being implemented through the National Planning Policy Framework and the Chancellor's proposed consultation on retail use class announced in this year's Budget;
- Discounts to tax bills for small retailers announced earlier this year;
- The impact of Employment Allowances on small business and retail sector growth;
- Findings from a recent Future High Streets Forum study identifying leadership as a key factor in boosting high street regeneration; and
- Next steps for meeting the needs of consumers, following an in-depth study which credits 'convenience culture' with driving a recent high street revival.

Discussion will also be informed by a recently published Business, Innovation and Skills Committee report on the retail sector, which recommended a 'wholesale review' of business rates.

The conference will bring together key policymakers with local authorities, retailers and other businesses, planners, town centre management teams, the third sector and other key stakeholders.

**Recommendation:**

That approval is given for the Executive Member for Planning and Development to attend the High Street Renewal and Reconfiguration Conference, to be held on 3 February 2015 in Central London.

**Reason:**

This seminar will present an opportunity to engage with key policymakers and other interested parties.

Speakers and attendees are expected to be a senior and informed group numbering around 120, including Members of both Houses of Parliament, senior government officials involved in this area of policy, representatives from local authorities, businesses and their advisors, experts from the planning and legal professions, community and civic groups, campaigning organisations, and academics and commentators, together with reporters from the national and trade press.

**Cost of Proposals:**

The cost for attendance at this conference is £210 + VAT; travel and appropriate subsistence costs would also be payable.

The costs can be met from within existing budgets.

**Risk Assessment:**

There are no significant risks in relation to the Executive Member for Planning and Development to attend the High Street Renewal and Reconfiguration Conference, to be held on 3 February 2015 in Central London.